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MEDIA RELEASE

Journalists invited to visit irrigation farms

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NSWIC is pleased to announce a new Media Information Initiative giving journalists access to meet irrigation farmers in NSW.

NSW Irrigators' Council CEO Luke Simpkins, said "We believe this new initiative will be a valuable way for journalists to better understand farmers who use irrigation to produce our food and fibre, and to meet the communities they support."

"It has been hard seeing the irrigation farmers we admire for their efficient and ethical practices being misrepresented and then reported in the media – so we're doing something about it."

"It is important for our integrity as an industry that people can understand how our system works, and why farmers use irrigation technology and infrastructure."

"The purpose of irrigation technology is to best manage the water resources we do have. Irrigation allows management of water in a way that maximises the yields of food and fibre so we can get the most out of the water which is available, which is very important in a country as dry country as ours."

"Without the use of irrigation technologies, yields would be lower, meaning we would have to use more water to maintain the same amount of food and fibre production."

"We are proud that Australia's irrigation farmers are some of the most water efficient in the world. What our farmers can get out of the water they do have is a true testament to the industry."

"Irrigation technology allows farmers to be more resilient to the harsh realities of Australia's dry climate, and allows all Australians to continue to have a supply of high-quality fresh produce."

Unfortunately, this is not the way media has presented irrigation farmers or water management, and we are missing a valuable opportunity to tell this story and showcase what really happens on the ground.

“Allocations of water to agriculture are based on how much water is in the system – at the moment, unfortunately that number is low/zero. There has been only 30GL of inflows (less than 1%) into the Murray-Darling Basin river system in the first 6 months of 2018/19. Therefore, irrigation farmers have hardly been able to touch water from our river systems for close to two years now”.

“What we need is a change of perception so that people understand why irrigation is important to efficient and sustainable food production.”

What we need is to ensure the public has access to this information. Inviting journalists to meet with irrigation farmers to see how it all operates on the ground will be a valuable way to do this. We urge journalists to understand the sector before writing about the sector”.

Journalists who are interested in understanding irrigation farming, the growing of food, cotton and wool are encouraged to contact NSWIC at nswic@nswic.org.au to express interest.
ENDS

For further information:

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Approved JC/TN